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THE ZIONIST PERIL.

IT is no light thing to undertake the indictment of a great movement inspired by indubitable public spirit and singleness of purpose. I may therefore be forgiven if I venture to say a word or two of the circumstances which have gradually made of me a convinced and uncompromising anti-Zionist.

I began with an open mind, but one in which the bias was not indistinctly favourable to Dr. Herzl. When doubts of the practicability of the idea began to dawn upon me I abstained from expressing them, because I felt that the enthusiasm and racial solidarity stimulated by the movement should not be lightly discouraged. Since then, however, the energy of the Zionists and their aggressive realism have forced into the foreground of Jewish politics certain practical aspects of the question, which must lead every Jew to ask himself whither the new enthusiasm and its resultant racial solidarity are leading. Is the scheme itself possible or desirable? If it is not possible, how is the striving for it affecting our present position in the world and our more manifest destiny? When the inevitable crash of disillusionment comes, will it leave us better or worse off? These and similar questions have much exercised my mind during the last few months, and I feel they are questions to which no Jew who has a real interest

in his people, in their history and their mission, should postpone a definite answer.

Two practical aspects of the Zionist movement first induced me to enter the field of controversy against the followers of Dr. Herzl. Both were essentially tactical, and neither at first sight involved a decision on the main issue. The first was the attempted raid of Mr. Zangwill—the confessedly irresponsible and irrepressible “Dr. Jim” of Herzlian politics—on the funds of the Jewish Colonization Association (I. C. A.), picturesquely described as “The Hirsch Millions.” The second was the scheme for the establishment of a Jewish Ghetto in East Africa under the guise of a “Nacht-Asyl für Jerusalem.” Of the East African scheme I shall have something to say at length presently.

The raid on the I. C. A. could not but arouse my antagonism, because in the first place I knew that the case by which it was supported was founded in error, and in the second place I viewed with alarm the possibility of squandering, on vague and nebulous political adventures, funds which were expressly excluded from such application both by the letter of the endowment and the intention of the founder, and which were already doing much practical good, and were capable of a great deal more in the visible future. It seemed to me that as between the substance and the shadow no practical man ought to hesitate. Mr. Zangwill supported his demands by two main allegations, both of which I denied. The first was that the I. C. A. was a failure, that it was doing virtually nothing, and that the proposed extension of its functions was in itself a confession of incompetency. In denying these statements at the time, I relied merely on a comparison of the reports of the I. C. A. with those of the Zionist organizations—on the one hand, together with the acknowledgment of many inevitable difficulties and disappointments, a splendid record of fruitful activity in the shape of agricultural colonies actually established, numerous schools founded and subventioned, many loan banks in

beneficent operation, and gigantic streams of emigration methodically organized, equipped, and directed; on the other, only a number of sterile debating societies and Dr. Herzl's ever recurring *Mañana*. Since then I have had an opportunity of looking more closely into the matter, and quite recently, in Roumania, I have seen the I. C. A. at work. It is not too much to say that already that great work has brought the Roumanian question—one of the main perplexities of the Jewish people during the last forty years—within measurable distance of solution, and this is not merely my opinion, but the universal opinion of the Jews of Roumania themselves. This is one of the things that the I. C. A. has been doing while the Zionists have been dreaming.

Mr. Zangwill's second contention was that, in a more or less unconscious way, Baron de Hirsch was himself a Zionist, and that had he lived to know Dr. Herzl's scheme, and to witness its progress, he would have unhesitatingly given his millions to the Zionist exchequer. Only quite recently, I see that on the strength of a good-natured letter to a Palestine Colonization Association, something of the same idea has been repeated, and conclusions have been drawn from it which are absolutely unwarranted. When I placed against this assumption the evidence of Baron de Hirsch's reiterated statements to me and others, I was informed by Mr. Zangwill that the Baron could have known nothing of Zionism, since it was not invented until after his death. Let me once for all put an end to this error. Dr. Herzl's scheme existed long before the death of Baron de Hirsch, and Dr. Herzl even consulted Baron de Hirsch in the summer of 1895 with regard to it, and solicited his support. The documents and correspondence relating to this negotiation are still in existence, and I do not make this statement without having seen them. I refer to this controversy, however, not so much for the purpose of establishing an historical fact as of illustrating the sort of practical experience which must

necessarily force the Jewish community to make up its mind on the Zionist question. The effect of the I.C.A. controversy, so far as I am concerned, was to awaken in me a keen sense of the danger of wasting in wild and impracticable dreams energies and resources which are required, and are being fruitfully used for the solution of more urgent problems. The East African scheme carried me still more deeply to the perils of the whole movement.

The starting-point of any satisfactory inquiry into the validity of the case put forward by the Zionists—setting aside the barren arguments based on highly controversial questions of Biblical prophecy—must be a clear perception of the leading principles of Jewish history during the last hundred years, and a definite answer to the question whether the main strivings of the Jews during that period have succeeded, or whether they have failed as disastrously as Dr. Herzl's followers—rather than Dr. Herzl himself—would have us believe.

A hundred years ago a new hope dawned in Jewry. Its objective was indicated by the famous treatise "*Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden*," written at the instance of Moses Mendelssohn, by Christian Wilhelm Dohm. Its means were illustrated by Mendelssohn himself in his still more famous translation of the Bible into classical German. These two works pointed the way to the new life. They virtually bade the Jews accept their dispersion as, humanly speaking, an irrevocable fact, and to give the only possible logical effect to it by demanding political rights and social incorporation at the hands of the nations among whom the inscrutable accidents of history had distributed them. At the same time they recognized that the success of emancipation largely depended on the Jews themselves, and they consequently urged the necessity of practical steps in the way of social assimilation. It is worth noticing that this teaching was no sensational panacea advertised from the housetops by practised demagogues. It grew slowly and unostentatiously

out of the irresistible nature of things, and it manifested itself less by showy expositions of its aims than by its material fruits. It was through the silent influence of Mendelssohn's fine character on men like Lessing and Lavater, through the educational schemes of Hartwig Wessely and the school system of Herz Homberg, through the stimulus given to Jewish culture, and to a more public-spirited discretion in the conception of Judaism itself by David Friedländer, Isaac Euchel, Solomon Maimon, and Lazarus Bendavid, that the new departure established itself almost without the consciousness of a wrench.

Those who to-day would hint a doubt as to the value of the services rendered by these men will do well to bear in mind the evils from which they rescued the Jewish people—evils which have a very decided bearing on the possible failure of the new Zionism to-day. It was the period so graphically described by Graetz as that of the "Allgemeine Verwilderung." The last attempt at the re-nationalization of Judaism by Sabbethai Zevi had failed disastrously, and even ignominiously. Despair had fastened on the whole of Jewry. Its denizens looked blankly to the future and saw no glimmer of hope. The fine intellects which had produced the poets and philosophers of the Middle Ages, which even in the bitterest anguish of persecution had flung the gauntlet in the teeth of a persecuting world by means of *Piyutim* palpitating with defiance and instinct with poetic beauty, and by polemical defences of Judaism courageous to the verge of blasphemy, were now running riot in Cabalistical extravagance, were palsied by an ingrowing and stagnant bigotry or were engaged in mumbling the catchwords of misunderstood litanies as a sort of spiritual soporific. Renationalization had been the only hope, and it had proved a mocking phantom. It had been shown to be impossible, not only for political reasons, but because the Jews themselves had ceased to possess the elements of a revival of their national life. They were scattered, divided, and polyglot. Even

where they chiefly congregated their Ghetto experiences had transformed them into a people quite different from that which had migrated from Judea eighteen centuries before. Their habits, their customs, their very vernaculars were so many badges of a status which had no place in the existing constitution of society or in the scheme of historic progress. They were, in short, at the turning-point of a road which led direct to barbarization. It was from this terrible situation that what we call to-day the Mendelssohnian Movement rescued us. The remedies it employed were, in the domain of religion, a new steadfastness founded in reasonable theology and historical study, and, in the domain of politics, local assimilation and emancipation. These have been the ends for which the last three generations of Jews have mainly striven.

Now what we are asked by the Zionists of the practical school to believe is that these aims have proved the emptiest of delusions. At first we were told that the appeal for renationalization did not necessarily address itself to the Western Jew who felt secure in his emancipation; but this assurance was only a lingering relic of Dr. Herzl's original scheme, which contemplated a prosaic refuge for persecuted Jews without any essential Zionist significance, and it has long ago been abandoned at the bidding of the zealots, and under the influence of the romantic pessimism of Dr. Nordau and Mr. Zangwill. The new Zionist postulate is that Judaism is decaying; that emancipation is a fraud, and that assimilation is an ethnical impossibility. Are these contentions justified? Have we really made no substantial progress since the "*Allgemeine Verwilderung*" of a hundred years ago? Can it honestly be said, as we count up the gains of that period, that what we have won was not worth fighting for, that we are none the better for it, that there is no hope of a final triumph, and that once more we must perforce turn Jewish history topsy-turvy if we are to save Judaism and the Jewish people from extinction?

I think we need only state the question in some such terms as these to realize its inherent absurdity. Think for a moment what we have done in these hundred years. Our legal emancipation has been won in every civilized country in the world except Russia, Roumania, and Turkey, and in those lands we are refused our political rights only by virtue of a retrograde doctrine of nationality, which is itself one of the chief inspirations of Zionism. As for the alleged unreality and possible reversal of these emancipations we may easily reassure ourselves. Broadly speaking our victories were due, not to any special tolerance or sympathy for the Jewish people, but to a revolution in the conception of nationality which is fundamental to the modern constitution of society. Religious toleration and the acceptance of naturalization in lieu of the old doctrine of the indelibility of allegiance were the principles which governed Jewish emancipation. They established a sort of economic Brotherhood of Man in place of the old theologico-racial classification of nations. Consequently it is impossible to repeal the emancipations of dissenting religious communities, or even to hinder their full development without seriously imperilling the new and already deeply rooted national principles.

There is of course a Zionist answer to this argument. It generally takes the complimentary form of a more or less implied assimilation of the Jewish problem to the Negro and Chinese problems in the United States. Once the nations realize, it is said, that the Jews are as unassimilable as the Black and Yellow races, they will assuredly exclude them from all terms of political and social equality. This is, no doubt, true, but what is not true is that the contingency here contemplated is ever likely to arise. The conclusion is accurate enough, but the premise is illusory. The Jews are certainly not as unassimilable as the Black and Yellow races, for the simple reason that nature has made them white men, and given them physical and mental characteristics closely

resembling those of many of the European races among whom they dwell, while history has made them Europeans of nearly two thousand years' residence. This at once opens an indispensable door to assimilation which the Black and Yellow races do not possess.

Nevertheless it is urged that the Jews are "anthropologically a separate race," and that as long as they do not marry with non-Jews it is hopeless to expect their complete emancipation with their fellow citizens of other races and creeds. It is a pity that the gentlemen who formulate these crude statements do not dip occasionally into some elementary manual of anthropology. What is an "anthropologically separate race"? The anthropologists themselves have never been able to tell us. Is the Jewish race "anthropologically separate" from what is known as the Aryan race? The scientists are as a Babel of controversy on the question, although every Zionist platform orator thinks himself competent to formulate an affirmative answer as axiomatic. Nevertheless the balance of evidence is against the separate race theory. So far as the Bible can guide us, it distinctly shows that the Jews were of Aryan origin, and that anthropologically they were in a state of flux until after the return from Babylon, when Ezra and the High Priests organized Judaism. What happened to them then has happened to every organized religious community in the world since. A centripetal anthropological movement set in. In this way what is called "the Jewish race" was formed. But strictly speaking it is not a race. It is merely a religious community of great antiquity, which in consequence of intermarriage during some two thousand three hundred years has acquired a more fixed physical type than younger religious communities of white men. Given the same age and the same harsh history, and other religious communities would develop for themselves a racial identity not less marked than that of the Jews.

The European Jews then are a religious community of

white men not essentially different from the European Roman Catholics and Protestants. Still we are told by the Zionists that their complete assimilation as Europeans must be impossible as long as they set their faces against mixed marriages. The etymology and sociology of the Zionists are apparently not less crude than their anthropology. They have yet to master the meaning of the word "assimilation," of which they talk and write so glibly. They have an idea that assimilation and fusion mean the same thing. No sensible man dreams of requiring the Jews to fuse with the Christians. Even M. de Plehve told me that he did not contemplate such a thing, or regard it as indispensable to the solution of the Jewish question in Russia. All that assimilation means, is that the Jews shall become good citizens in the same way as Roman Catholics are good citizens in England and Protestants are good citizens in France. That is that they shall adopt the social manners and customs, and share in the unsectarian interests, traditions, hopes, and ideals of their non-Jewish fellow citizens. Intermarriage is no bar to this assimilation. If it were the English Roman Catholics who were "spaniolized," as Cromwell said, by persecution in the seventeenth century, and the French Protestants who were the *sans-patries* of the sixteenth century would still be outcasts in their respective countries. For it must be remembered that the prohibition of mixed marriages—that is of anthropological fusion—is common to all the great religions, and to many of their subdivisions. Thus in Germany to-day 953 Protestants and 882 Roman Catholics out of every 1000 marry Protestants and Roman Catholics respectively, while the proportion of Jewish intermarriages is not more than 961 in every thousand. In other words, the intensity of the so-called racial separatism of the Jews is a question of eight per mille or four-fifths per cent. It is on this minute difference that the portentous Zionist theory of our unassimilability is founded!

But the most conclusive answer to the doctrine of Jewish unassimilability is the proof the Jews have already given of their facile adaptation to new environments. The modern Jew, even in the most grotesque caricature which the anti-Semites draw of him, bears but little resemblance to his Western Asiatic ancestors. The evil qualities and strange customs which are held to illustrate his unassimilability are not Asiatic, but exclusively European. They are the results of his long seclusion by methods which are part and parcel of European history. He wears garments which are a relic of arrested assimilation at the moment when the days of Polish liberty were violently ended. His dialects are largely formed of the German of the Minnesingers which had become his vernacular before the Ghetto closed upon him, or the archaic Castilian which his forefathers spoke before Torquemada hounded them out of Spain. His very cookery-book is a patchwork of recipes gathered from every European country in brighter days. Under oppressions which would have extirpated a less assimilable race, he has turned successively from agriculture to industry, and from industry to trade. He has even made himself a new literature out of the unpromising materials of his Ghetto history and jargons, covering the whole gamut of human emotion and thought. Is not all this a triumphant demonstration of his ready adaptability to his European environment? And has he shown any symptoms during the last hundred years of a decay of this extraordinary faculty of assimilation? Weed out from the Jewish communities of the West the Polish immigrants who are still in their first generation and judge for yourselves. Only a hundred years, remember, since this emancipation movement began; scarcely fifty since the last Ghetto gates were for ever levelled with the dust; and look at the part he has played in the national lives of the countries which have allowed him to imbibe their spirit! If Germany honours Heine as her greatest poet since Goethe, if France declares Catulle Mendès to

be the literary heir of Victor Hugo, if England venerates the memory of Lord Beaconsfield as the illustrious statesman who preserved the historic continuity of British political institutions in the age of Democratic revolution, are not these all unimpeachable certificates of the assimilability of the Jew, and of his congenital sympathy with the highest forms of the civilizations with which he is brought in contact? I will say nothing of the cruel irony which has made Theodor Herzl the most popular feuilletonist in Central Europe, and which ranks Israel Zangwill among the half a dozen leading novelists of the Anglo-Saxon world, for they are both friends of mine, and I should be sorry to indulge in personalities which might cause them pain. But the fact remains that the assimilability of the Jew is far beyond the reach of reasonable doubt, and if we may judge by our experience of the last hundred years it will soon be beyond the reach of wrongheaded cavil.

But I have not yet done with the case of the Zionists against the Mendelssohnian settlement. An ounce of fact, they will doubtless say, is worth a ton of theory. Even though it might be disastrous to do anything which would discredit the liberal principles in virtue of which the Jews have been emancipated, and though it might also be difficult to refute the evidence of the right of the Jews, legal and moral, to the privileges of citizens and the courtesies of social recognition,—still the European public do not think so, and this is demonstrated by the rise and progress of anti-Semitism in Western Europe during the last quarter of a century, and by the tenacity with which the Jews are still refused any status but that of helots in Russia and Roumania.

I am not daunted by this argument. The anti-Semitic movement in Western Europe is very largely artificial. It is the outcome of conditions which are essentially transitory—the interaction of the nationalist Romanticism which was stimulated by the wars of the second half of

the nineteenth century, and the retarded assimilation of the Jewish element let loose by the sudden political emancipation only some fifty years ago, and by the continuous renewal of the unassimilated contingent ever since from over the Russian frontier. The old-world prejudices thus revived have been fomented by political factions for their own purposes rather than because of any genuine belief in the Semitic peril. There is nothing in all this to cause serious alarm, and certainly no reason to despair of a favourable solution. Already the signs of decay in organized anti-Semitism are very pronounced, as measured by its parliamentary representation, and this notwithstanding that the assimilation problem still presents difficulties. Moreover, the hard-shell nationalist movements are romantic anachronisms very much akin to Zionism itself, and they are bound eventually to give way to the dominating economic forces which are making everywhere for the greater tolerance of the stranger, and consequently for mixed nationalities. The real difficulty is, of course, with the continuous migration from Russia where the Pale of Settlement is one huge reservoir of Jews in a condition of arrested assimilation. But here also I am not without hope.

Before I deal with the Russian and Roumanian questions it will be convenient to sum up briefly the conclusions at which I have so far arrived. I pointed out in the early part of this paper that Zionism is an avowed negation of the policy of local emancipation which has been the leading principle of Jewish history during the last century, and that it is attempted to justify it by the contentions that the Jews have proved an unassimilable element among the non-Jewish nations, that consequently their emancipations are imperfect, and can never be completed in the spirit, and that as a further result Judaism itself has degenerated into little more than a fetish. So far as Western Europe is concerned I think I have adduced good reason for believing that the first and second of these

Zionist contentions are unfounded. The Jew has brilliantly vindicated the wisdom of the emancipation policy by the most remarkable demonstrations of his assimilability. Politically emancipation is a solid reality which is not likely ever to be disturbed, and there is every reason to hope that with time its social completion will become not less perfect. Of the belief that Judaism itself is decaying I have so far said nothing, because, as I will presently show, the whole Zionist theory is largely based on a misconception of the evolution of the religious mission of Israel. For the moment I will content myself with pointing out how completely the vaticinations of the early emancipation pessimists in regard to Judaism have been exploded. Was it not Boerne who compared the orthodox Jew under persecution to a wayfarer who draws his cloak more closely round him the more furiously the wind blows and who prophesied that as soon as the storm of persecution abated, and the sun of freedom shone, the same Jew would cast his cloak of orthodoxy from him? Well, a hundred years have passed in the sunshine of growing freedom, and the Jew still wears that cloak, more proudly, more earnestly, more intelligently than in the old days. Mr. Zangwill has accounted for this phenomenon by saying that it is a wretched thing for a religion to be saved by its fools. The gibe is not complimentary to many earnest and convinced Jews, who are not only among his most attached friends, but are also in the foremost rank of his intelligent admirers.

Russia and Roumania constitute the strongest cards of the Zionists. It is in those countries that they find the larger part of their membership, and that they seem to perceive the most convincing proofs of the hopelessness of the emancipation movement, and of the ingrained unassimilability of the Jews. The fact that the Zionists are comparatively numerous in Russia is scarcely surprising, for there are six millions of Jews in the country mostly orthodox. I am tempted to requote Mr. Zangwill's

Carlylean definition of the orthodox Jew to which I just referred as a further reason for the Zionist strength in Russia, but as a matter of fact the orthodox Jew in Russia is an anti-Zionist.

With regard to emancipation and assimilation, my first reason for refusing to acquiesce in the Zionist contention in regard to Russia is that that Empire is not exempt from the law of political progress by which the whole of the Western world is governed. It is, of course, possible that Prince Uchtomsky's dream of a reversion of Russia to its primitive Asiatic condition may one day be realized, and, in that remote contingency, it would be difficult to forecast the lot of the Jews; but even then it is interesting to note that Prince Uchtomsky has realized that a Russian domination of Asia can only succeed on the condition of complete toleration for all Asiatic religions. Hitherto, however, this has not been the path on which Russia has been travelling. She lags half a century or so (perhaps more) behind Europe, but she is not marching in the contrary direction. So far as the Jews are concerned she is very much in the same position as was Central Europe previously to 1830. She is governed on the principles of which Metternich was then the most conspicuous exponent, and as a consequence she is honeycombed with revolutionary elements precisely in the same way as was Austria three-quarters of a century ago. The parallel is completed by the fact that the Jews are heart and soul with the revolutionary propaganda, and that their own revolutionary organization, the famous Bund, is among the most formidable agencies at work in the transformation of the present régime. During my recent visit to Russia I paid considerable attention to this aspect of the Jewish question, and I regret that the scope of this paper will not permit me to give the results of my investigations in detail. Of this, however, I assured myself: the agencies of progress and liberty in Russia working on the traditional lines of European political

evolution are in an exceedingly hopeful state, and, although in the changed conditions of militarism we cannot expect an exact reproduction in Russia of the events of 1848 in Western Europe, the beneficent results of those events will, I am confident, be attained within a reasonable period of time.

At any rate the Jews themselves do not regard their political prospects in so desperate a light as the Zionists paint them. The idea that there is a powerful demand for Zionism in Russia is altogether a delusion. In the first place the great mass of the Russian and Polish Jews are Chassidim, and they are anti-Zionists to a man. The next most numerous class are the Miznagdim or Conservatives who differ in many things from the Chassidim, but entirely share their aversion to "forcing the hands of Providence" in regard to the destinies of the Jewish people. Both these classes belong, no doubt, to Mr. Zangwill's category of fools, but none the less the fact remains that they form the great majority of unemancipated and unassimilated Jewry, and they will not hear of Zionism under any circumstances. Then there are two schools of Jewish nationalists of considerable influence. The first has for its object the revival of a specifically Hebrew culture as the medium of Jewish life in all its aspects. The second, led by Peretz the jargon poet, refuses to go back to Hebrew culture or to go forward to assimilation with the Gentile, but claims that the Jews in their captivity have developed a new *Yiddish* culture of their own which ought to be fixed, fertilized and developed. Both these schools have Zionist possibilities, but Zionism is an open question with them and they are quite prepared to work out their destiny in Russia itself.

There remain the great mass of the uneducated and indigent lower classes and the educated middle and upper classes. The lower classes do not understand the question or care to understand it. They have enough to do to scrape together the few *kopecks* weekly which stand

between them and starvation, and Zionism does not help them in that quest. The middle and upper classes differ in their views according to the provinces of the Pale in which they are domiciled. In the Russian provinces the middle classes are very largely Zionists and it is there that Dr. Herzl finds his chief support. But it is not because they hanker specially for Jerusalem or because they are conscious of their own unassimilability with the Gentile that they have embraced Zionism, but because they have never known any other form of nationality. The Russian Jews have always been outcasts from the Russian national life. Zionism has awakened in them an instinct which hitherto has found no means of expression, and even then this instinct is less a consciousness of Hebrew nationality than an indignant protest against the refusal of the Russians to admit them to Russian nationality. When I told some well-informed Jewish friends of mine in Warsaw that M. de Plehve had told me that he counted on the spread of Zionism in Russia to check Jewish Socialism—that is the Jewish striving for political emancipation—they smiled and assured me that while most of the Socialists were strong anti-Zionists there were very few artisan Zionists—as for example the so-called Poelitzin—who were not affiliated to the Bund. Indeed at the recent Rabbinical Conference at Grodno the Zionists were all formally condemned as allies of the Socialists. As for the upper classes of Jews in Russia they are all confirmed assimilationists. They believe in civil and religious emancipation as the only possible solution of the Jewish question and as a certain means of transforming the Russian Jew into a Russian patriot. Do not imagine that the men who hold this view are deficient in Jewish spirit. Their leader, Baron Horace de Guensburg, is at once one of the most cultivated of men and one of the staunchest and most orthodox Jews in the world, a man whose every heart-throb is with his down-trodden brethren.

How true it is that Zionism has been adopted only as

a factitious substitute by the middle-class Russian Jews, and that there is really no foundation for the theory of the unassimilability of the Jewish subjects of the Tsar is shown by the feebleness of the Zionist movement in Poland. You have to seek for your Zionists in Warsaw, which is the largest *Kehilla* in Europe. Not one of the sixteen Rabbis of the City favours the movement, and the educated classes are, almost without exception, aggressively against it. The reason of this is exceedingly curious. It is not generally remembered in the West that the Polish Jews have already a nationality to which they are ardently attached. They are, in short, Polish citizens. They are proud to remember that they have a history in Poland, that for centuries they played a part in the national life of the country, that they fought gallantly for its independence and that in the most tragical period of its history when their blood was mingling with that of their Christian neighbours on the battle-field, they were made Polish citizens by a Polish *Ukase* which has never been repealed although the Russians have chosen to ignore it. Thousands still living lost fathers and brothers in the insurrection of 1863. To them Zionism offers no attraction. The independence of Poland is their political ideal. They speak only Polish among themselves, and they use every effort to teach it to their children, and to the Yiddish-speaking children of their poor, although the language is almost excluded from the schools. They are sturdy assimilationists, but only as far as Poland is concerned; and they persist in this patriotic attitude in spite of the anti-Semitism which is officially stimulated and nursed by the Russian authorities in Poland, and in spite of the fact that if they chose to throw in their lot with the Russian Government it would certainly bring them much material advantage. I know of no more eloquent vindication of the assimilability of the Jew than the really heroic attitude of our Polish coreligionists.

These, then, are the results of my Russian investigations: The chances of emancipation are by no means desperate,

and the capacity of the Russian Jew for assimilation is in no way inferior to that of his Western coreligionists. The local demand for Zionism is comparatively small, and what there is of it is confined to the Russians, as distinct from the Poles, and they would become Russian citizens to-morrow if they had the chance. But even were the situation otherwise, the magnitude of the Russo-Jewish question excludes Zionism or any other scheme of emigration from the category of effective remedies.

In Roumania, I am sorry to say, I omitted to take any notes of the Zionist movement. There was the less necessity to do so, however, since on all hands I heard that the situation of the Jews had greatly improved. The fact is that the Roumanian question is a manageable one. The agitation organized by the Jews in Western Europe in 1902-3 was very effective and taught the Roumanian Government a lesson which is likely to be remembered. This lesson has been emphasized by the I. C. A., which, besides undertaking colossal schemes of relief and education, has during the last few years reduced the Jewish population by 15 per cent. through emigration. M. Sturdza, the Premier, affected in a conversation with me to be very pleased with this diminution of the number of Jews in the country, although he referred somewhat bitterly to what he called the "theatrical" way in which it was organized; but Sir John Kennedy, our minister at Bucharest, assured me that in view of the sparseness of the population of the country the magnitude of the emigration was causing the Government no small anxiety. The Minister of Finance had indeed not disguised his alarm at the loss of 40,000 persons, all producers and consumers and many of them tax-payers. Hence it is apparent that in Roumania even less than in Russia is Zionism required as a solution of the Jewish question.

I have dealt at such length with the main question as to whether Zionism responds to an obvious and crying want in the present situation of Jewry that I will not

at this moment linger over a consideration of the further question whether, even if the need existed, Dr. Herzl's scheme is reasonably feasible. I will only say that the more closely I have studied the political difficulties, the more thoroughly I have convinced myself that they are insuperable and that, as far as human foresight can reach, there is no conceivable development of Eastern or international politics which is likely to render the realization of the scheme practicable. Moreover, even if realized, it could never prove such a revival of the Hebrew Commonwealth as would respond to the dreams of those who most earnestly support; it and if it fell into the hands of an advanced party under Mr. Zangwill, who I see has been proposing in the *American Sunday School Times* to abolish the marriage restrictions of Ezra and Nehemiah, it would assuredly fall to pieces with abiding scandal to the Jewish people. In either case it would fail because no state nowadays can be founded on a racial basis, and no religious community can be kept together on mixed marriages and the consequent secularization of the marriage tie. For a prophetic glimpse of the disastrous effects of such a failure we need only look back to the "Allgemeine Verwirrung" which followed on the fall of Sabbethai Zevi and from which the emancipation movement a hundred years ago happily rescued us.

This fortunately is a remote peril, but the Zionist movement as it stands to-day in its preliminary propaganda is not without considerable danger to the security and happiness of the Jews throughout the world. These perils could not be more strikingly exemplified than by the new scheme of an autonomous colony in East Africa. The very conception of the scheme illustrates the retrograde and alien spirit—alien, that is, to the spirit of British citizenship—which Zionism itself has already generated in the bosoms of its English neophytes. Let me in the first place point out to you how it justifies the reproach that the Zionists would rather dream of the creation of an

impossible political organism than avail themselves of any practical chance that presented itself of giving immediate relief to the sufferers from persecution. Any addition to the existing Jewish agricultural colonies of the world, under favourable auspices and in a new country, would always be a relief to persecuted Jewry. Well, the Zionists have the chance of creating such a colony in East Africa. The British Government has generously offered the land, and the "Hirsch millions" are at Dr. Herzl's disposal on the sole condition that the colony shall offer a reasonable prospect of success, and shall not be made to serve any political end. One would have imagined that in these circumstances the Zionists would have jumped at the opportunity of doing a little practical good pending the coming of the Messiah. No, they refused the I. C. A.'s terms and declared that either they would have their autonomous *Nacht-Asyl* or, so far as they were concerned, there should be no colony at all. I need not comment on this incident, for its disagreeable moral lies on the surface.

That the approval of the scheme by English Jews shows that their appreciation of Jewish as well as British interests has been stunted by their Zionism is also, to my mind, abundantly clear. The scheme aims at the creation of a Ghetto in the British Empire. It is consequently an ungrateful repudiation of the advantages and distinction of British citizenship, and hence is calculated to promote or justify doubts as to the sincerity of the much vaunted patriotism of the Jews and the reality of their faculty of assimilation. Here then is a direct incentive to anti-Semitism. But it is not the only one. I have already shown that the Ghetto is the real parent of anti-Semitism, inasmuch as it crystallizes the strange customs of the unassimilated Jews whom it segregates. I have been much attacked for saying that these customs, besides being strange, are disagreeable, and Mr. Zangwill has begged me to note that even segregation when there is plenty of room

and the Government is liberal is not injurious. My reply to Mr. Zangwill is that if he will examine the state of affairs in Austrian Galicia where all the conditions he enumerates exist, the results will be found precisely as I have described them.

From the Imperial point of view the scheme is not less objectionable. It is not to the interest of any country to obstruct or postpone the assimilation of its subjects. The Downing Street idea that this settlement would be a Hebrew colony is a delusion. It would most certainly be a jargon colony and hence predominantly German. Autonomy and the supreme direction from Vienna would crystallize this Germanism, and in course of time this might easily become a source of embarrassment to the whole British Protectorate just as the influence wielded by the 41,000 jargon-speaking and Germanophil Jews in Jerusalem has become an embarrassment for Turkey. But of course there is a Zionist answer to this. The settlement, it is said, is only temporary; it is a *Nacht-Asyl für Jerusalem*. Well, tell Lord Lansdowne that. Tell him that the colony is to be a "jumping-off ground" for Palestine, and see what the Law Officers of the Crown have to say to it.

As for the pretension that autonomy is required in the interests of the national customs of the Jews, that is a gratuitous reflection on the orthodoxy of the non-Zionists. When I challenged Mr. Zangwill in the *Times* to produce a list of these national customs which cannot be observed in a British colony without political autonomy, I was referred (not by him but by somebody else) to one only—the Sabbath. But there is no essential restriction on the observance of the Jewish Sabbath or on the substitution of Sunday work for it in England; and where Jews mostly congregate, as in the East End of London, the observance is fraught with little or no inconvenience. The only restrictions that emancipated Jews have to observe are that they cannot make the stranger within

their gates observe the Sabbath or stone to death the Jew who desecrates it. I do not imagine that the *Nacht-Asyl* is designed to correct these anomalies. Latterly Mr. Greenberg has given us another national custom for the observance of which we are said to require a political free-hand—the Jewish law of Marriage and Divorce. May I ask him what law? Is it the Deuteronomic or the Rabbinic law of Divorce? Is it the ancient Polygamy which lingered among the Italian Jews as late as the seventeenth century, or Rabbi Gershom's monogamous "custom of the Gentile" of the tenth century, or Mr. Zangwill's recent repudiation of the marriage regulations of Ezra and Nehemiah which even the Paris Sanhedrin upheld? In most of these cases I should tremble for Judaism in the *Nacht-Asyl*, though in some of them the settlement would no doubt enjoy for a time a certain remunerative vogue as a Jewish Gretna Green.

The perils revealed by the East African scheme, especially in regard to the development of a general *Anschaauung* distinctly alien to the spirit of the nations among whom the emancipated Zionists now dwell, are typical of the whole Zionist propaganda. I am certain that if this continues it must lead to serious trouble. It will certainly give a new lease of life to the anti-Semitic agitation, which otherwise must pursue a downward course. There can be no question, for example, that in Russia the hope that Zionism will reduce the difficulties of the Jewish problem by spiking the guns of the Jewish Socialists and promoting emigration has already tended to relax the efforts of statesmen to find a solution in more liberal legislation. Mr. Zangwill discovered the other day that anti-Semitism had made its way into Great Britain. I think he is mistaken; but if he is right it must be admitted that there is a significant coincidence in its following so closely on the heels of Zionism.

To sum up, then: the characteristic peril of Zionism is that it is the natural and abiding ally of anti-Semitism

and its most powerful justification. It is an attempt to turn back the course of modern Jewish history, which hitherto, on its political side, has had for its main object to secure for the Jewish people an equal place with their fellow citizens of other creeds in the countries in which they dwell, and a common lot with them in the main stream of human progress. It is essentially an ignorant and a narrow-minded view of a great problem—ignorant because it takes no account of the decisive element of progress in history; and narrow-minded because it confounds a political memory with a religious ideal. It is hypnotized by the crude popular apophthegm that history repeats itself. History never repeats itself on the main line of its advance. It uses the same materials and applies the same law of cause and effect in the solution of new problems at every stage of its ever-widening, ever-progressive march; but there is no turning back. Nothing that is once destroyed is ever really restored. The temporal power of Judaism was a stage in the religious progress of the world, the product of conditions which have passed away for ever. To try to reproduce it now would be like trying to breed fish in an exhausted watercourse. The Jewish state subserved the Jewish religious mission. It trained and concentrated the moral forces of the people for the miraculous work of converting the world to a higher spiritual life. It thus enabled it to fertilize both east and west and made it the male parent of Mahommedanism on the one hand and of Christianity on the other. The same drama has been enacted on a higher plane in our long captivity, which was again the product of conditions for ever vanished. But, like the national life, it has also subserved the spiritual mission. Meditation and martyrdom have given us a new force and a wider and nobler aspiration. We have emerged from the Ghetto better fitted to cope with the problems of that civilian life which is now the ideal of the modern world than almost any other people. Is it possible, even if it were desirable, to bottle

up these forces in the squalid blind-alley of Theodor Herzl's *Judenstaat*?

What, then, is our duty? Mr. Zangwill says "Denationalization or Renationalization." I can imagine that that was the cry of Jesus, and again I say that history will not repeat itself precisely in the same way. The doctrine of dogmatic proselytism is exploded, and consequently our choice is no longer between Denationalization and Renationalization. Our mission is the Mendelssohnian Mission as laid down in the famous letter of Moses Mendelssohn to Lavater. We have to show an example to the nations. We take our stand on the lofty toleration and real universalism of the Talmudic axiom that "the pious of all nations have their place in the world to come." Our highest traditional ideal is undoubtedly national, but it is not the nation of a kept principality but the holy nation of the Kingdom of priests. Having given to the world the fundamental laws which have made the most advanced races what they are, we have to complete the work in our providential dispersion by leading the way in the most fruitful application of those laws. That is the real Jewish Nationalism, the only true Zion.

LUCIEN WOLF.

[Since this paper was written, the gifted founder and leader of the Zionist movement, Dr. Theodor Herzl, has passed away. It would be a poor tribute to his memory to imagine that the great movement he founded had any reason to shelter itself under the pathos of his early death; and I feel, too, that it would be an evil reflection on my own method of controversy were I to change, by a word, the criticisms of his work I wrote in all honesty and read in public while he was living. The above paper is consequently left precisely as I wrote it last May. I would only

wish to add that no Zionist can mourn Dr. Herzl more sincerely than I do. His fine character, his brilliant attainments, and his personal charm have left an ineffaceable impression upon me, as upon all who knew him. It is some satisfaction to think that his memory cannot die, for in the few years he devoted to the Jewish question he wrote a large and imposing chapter in Jewish history—a chapter which even in spite of his critics, and his followers, will remain an imperishable monument to his genius.—L. W.]